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SOME FACTS ABOUT ART STUDY IN PARIS

In a few weeks the leading art schools of America will be closed for the summer, and then, as in former years, there will doubtless be a considerable exodus of ambitious young men and women to Paris "to complete their art education," or at least to enjoy a sojourn in the French capital amid the reputedly unrivaled advantages which that metropolis offers to the art student. The season makes pertinent a few remarks on the subject of this annual migration.

How many of the students who flock to Paris are prepared to reap the benefit of the influences they court? How many have any conception of the difficulties they will be forced to meet in realizing this dream of foreign study? A certain halo has been cast over the art schools of Paris, a certain glamour attaches to life in this Old World center of art education, and these are apt to blind the ambitious student to certain stern facts about which there is no halo, no glamour.

Indeed, a sort of fictitious glory is attached to the artist's calling by those unacquainted with the reality of the profession, and we have literary rhapsodies about artists' models, artists' studios, artists' methods, artists' triumphs, artists' whims and whimsicalities, and so on *ad libitum*. To the initiated this glory evaporates in humdrum experience, and the artist is simply a worker, like other workers.

In the same way the halo is being blown away from the Parisian art schools, and to the sensible aspirant for artistic honors the *Quartier Latin* is losing much of its charm. No one will depreciate the rank of the great art schools of Paris, or cheapen the value of the great Parisian art teachers. On the other hand, no one will extol the minor schools, or accord to them a rank comparable with that of hundreds of similar institutions in this country. To belittle the advantages offered by Paris and the Old World in general to any one who is fitted to appreciate and profit by those benefits would be puerile. Men like Abbey and Alexander have recently sounded the praises of the European art schools and museums, and they doubtless spoke from conviction, basing their statements on their own experience and observation.

Even the best teachers in the leading institutions of this country favor a post-graduate course of study in Paris. In making this recommendation, however, they criticize the general exodus, and qualify their recommendation to the extent of declaring that while a post-graduate course in Paris is especially desirable for the few, it is for the many a needless waste of time, and an unwise courting of hardship and danger. Certainly no good American teacher would recommend young American art students to go to Paris until they were sufficiently prepared by previous study to assimilate the influences neces-

sary for their development, and above all, no one would advise such students to go without adequate financial support during their stay.

If these requirements of maturity, attainment, and finances should be met by the male students, it is eminently more important that they should be met by the female students. The former are better able to endure uncertainties, and even privations, and besides, there is no comparison between the privileges accorded to the two sexes.

All art students are by courtesy budding Raphaels and Angelos until they have had an opportunity to prove to the contrary, which usually comes sooner or later. It is in art as in religion, a case of many being called and few being chosen. As a kindly critic pointed out a year or two ago, all these American art students in Paris take themselves seriously. Some of them are really serious. The hope and possibility of genius are strong within them. Paris offers itself as a great possibility when the end has come of student days in America, and in the absence or in defiance of warning the many take the step which good judgment would deny to all but the select few.

That a great number of students go to Paris to study art without a knowledge of the conditions that will there confront them, and without the necessary means to pay their way and live with ordinary home comfort, scarcely needs gainsaying. This is especially true in the case of young women. Some time ago an artist of distinction and experience who had studied in Paris and lived abroad, and who was thoroughly familiar with art education in the Old World, made public statement of a few facts which deserve attention. Said he:

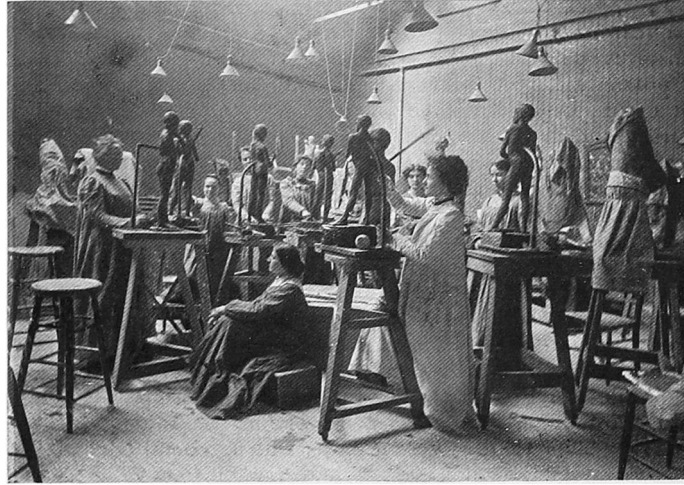
"While the French studios for men are possibly the best in the world, those for women are far from being the same. Most of the women students there study art as part of a general education or for amusement, and the studios are naturally suited to their level, although the names of some of the great French artists may be heralded as critics. These same artists go through such schools in a perfunctory manner, taking but slight interest in the work submitted to them, and their remarks are of but slight practical use.

"It is to be hoped that some one capable of speaking of our American schools, but not in any way connected with them, may make clear to the American women how much may be had at home in the way of art teachers of the very best, the instructors being men whose names rank as high as those of many of the Frenchmen, while their interest in the work and their knowledge of and care of the feelings of their countrywomen are of a nature found only in America.

"When all is said, Paris, unfortunately, offers temptations to the artist that are indeed most difficult to resist. In simple truth it must be admitted that in the case of a student who shows unusual talent or genius—one out of a thousand, or out of ten thousand—Paris is essential. But Paris cannot create a genius, and for the vast majority—the nine hundred and ninety-nine out of the thousand—Paris is useless."

While allowing all praise, therefore, to the great galleries of Paris, and the liberal treatment accorded to artists in them, and while allowing equally unreserved praise to the best schools and the best teachers of the metropolis, American educators cannot be too insistent in cautioning immature, inexperienced, or poor art students in general, and female art students in particular, against rejecting what is offered them at home, and courting an unprofitable experience abroad.

The Fellowship of the Alumni of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, after mature deliberation, recently took up this subject



CHARACTERISTIC LIFE CLASS IN SCULPTURE

of foreign art study with a view to checking, or at least discouraging, the uncalled-for exodus of young and unprepared girls intending to study art in Paris. It submitted a circular to the board of directors of the Academy, designed to accomplish this purpose, but the paper was returned without the approval asked for, and the movement was abandoned. The position of the Fellowship, however, was well taken. Its sole object was to impress on the young women of America intending to study art three facts, and these are worth quoting:

"1. That American art schools have not only multiplied of late, but have improved to such an extent that, in the opinion of several of our leading American artists living both here and abroad, our schools are far superior to the studios for women in Paris. One reason for this is, that Paris studios for women are in all cases merely private speculations.

"2. American girls going to Paris have no conception of the life they will be forced to lead: the obnoxious companionship, the antiquated, disease-breeding sanitary arrangements in the dwellings, the scanty food and liability of illness resulting therefrom, the dirt, the



CAROLUS DURAN TEACHING A CLASS

dishonesty, etc. These things they cannot, except in rare cases, escape. While we would be wanting in respect to our fellow-countrywomen to suspect for a moment their ability to resist the temptations to which they are sure to be subjected, our object is as far as possible to do away with the necessity of exposing them to such.

"3. American girls seldom realize that Paris is no longer a cheap city, but on the contrary, a very expensive one. No young woman should think of venturing there without an assured income of at least

seven hundred dollars a year, and even with that sum she must expect to put up with many privations, especially if alone and unprotected."

This timely caution and advice to young women, incorporated in the fourth annual report of the Fellowship, recently published, should be as seriously considered by the young men who go abroad as by the young women to whom it is specifically directed.

It is the verdict of those most competent to pass judgment upon the matter that for the great mass of art students work abroad has more risk than reward, and hence, whether it be a step prompted by the ambition of the student or by the ambition of his friends or family, no student should go to Paris to study without careful consideration.

Many an art student talented enough to win a traveling scholarship has been hopelessly ruined by the privileges accruing from the honor won. Idleness, the dissipation of energies resulting from travel, and the temptations incident to residence abroad have robbed them of the proud prestige which they acquired in their American schools, and left them worse off than though they had remained at home. "*Verbum sat sapienti.*"

EDMUND C. TALCOTT.



NOTES ON THE PARIS SALON

The Salon this year is notable—the Salon always is—but in general estimate it is notable more for its extent than for the intrinsic merit of the majority of the works shown. The great exhibition of the National Society of Fine Arts is scarcely equal to that of former years. It lacks brilliancy and vitality. It lacks especially originality of conception. When we say this, however, we should also say, in justice to the exhibiting artists, that if the standard of brilliancy, vitality, and originality is lower, the average of draftsmanship is markedly higher. The general tone of the pictures displayed is subdued, bordering at times on the somber. Whistler should feel especially complimented, since in point of color schemes Whistler dominates the show.

It will be of interest to the readers of BRUSH AND PENCIL to learn that America is especially well represented. There are nearly twice as many American exhibitors as of all other non-French artists put together. The number of artists who have oil-paintings in the Salon is four hundred and sixty-one; and of these thirty-nine are Americans, ten of the number being women. The exhibitors of pastels and water-colors are two hundred and forty-nine; of these sixteen are American, seven being women. Two of the sixty engravers represented are Americans. No American architects are on the lists of exhibitors, and there are only two American sculptors.

As evidence of the extent of the exhibition, which occupies the